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Child Sponsorship: A Path to its Future

Matthew Clarke
Deakin University

Brad Watson
Avondale College of Higher Education, brad.watson@avondale.edu.au

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Child Sponsorship: A Path to its Future

Matthew Clarke and Brad Watson

Introduction

Concluding a book of 15, diverse chapters on child sponsorship (CS) is a challenging task, made more difficult by the fact that there is no precedent to such a text. This is remarkable considering the many millions of children who have been assisted through sponsorship programmes since the inception of individual CS in the 1920s. As the first of its kind to deal explicitly with CS, this volume is a significant contribution to the broad foreign aid literature, blending perspectives of academics, practitioners, journalists and sponsored youth. Limited by its emphasis on a relatively small number of CS INGOs, this volume provides a series of stepping stones or direction markers, allowing for navigation through a veritable swamp of dated criticism, and a starting point for further discussion and analysis of key issues.

As a text, this volume is timely if somewhat overdue. Each year, developed nations provide around USD150 billion in official development assistance (or foreign aid) to address humanitarian needs globally, considering their own needs and vested interests in the process. Bilateral Foreign Aid is rarely given for purely altruistic reasons. Feeny and McGillivray (2008, p.522) have noted that DAC bilateral aid donors consider *both* recipient need *and* donor interests in determining aid allocations while Maizels and Nissanke (1984, p.891), have previously argued that 'bilateral aid allocations are made...solely...in support of donors' perceived foreign economic, political and security interests'. Further funds are channelled through private foundations and NGOs, among whom CS INGOs form an important sub-set. Wydick et al (2013) estimates that there are more than 9 million children currently being sponsored and CS agencies raise more than

USD3.3 billion annually from the sponsors of these children. According to Kharas (2008), World Vision International, the world's largest CS organization, delivers more than US$2 billion annually to address the needs of the world's poor, using children as the focal point of fundraising. As symbols of common humanity, the children offered to sponsors by INGOs are often still presented to Northern publics as the bearers of suffering with little or no responsibility for its causes (Holland in Burman, 1994, p.31).

Through their actions CS INGOs are engaged in a much broader process of constructing and deconstructing ideals of childhood, sacralizing them '...in a definitive shift from economic to emotional value', resulting sometimes in a disjunct between cultures in which members of Northern countries conceptualize children as priceless, non-labouring, non-productive, play oriented, innocent yet morally valued members of society (Bornstein, 2001, p.601). Consequently, CS has unprecedented appeal and legitimacy for the general public in the North. Beyond this, CS can not only boast longevity as one of the oldest sources of foreign aid, its popularity has surged and CS INGOs continue to proliferate. As a source of substantial aid flows from North to South, CS programmes in their various forms impact millions of children, families and communities in the South in ways that are rarely studied.

Additionally, CS advertising and advocacy impacts donors in the North, sometimes in keeping with tenets of good development education. Despite this, the origins and evolution of CS have been poorly documented, critique has often been perpetuated without reference to a typology, discussion is hindered by a stunning absence of effective, longitudinal research and CS INGO response to critique is rarely acknowledged. From an academic perspective, it is perplexing that such an important phenomenon should be so poorly documented and so little researched! In providing a number of case studies by a range of INGOs this volume has provided insights into the tensions CS institutions grapple with and manage. The volume is not uncritical of CS though, with a number of chapters challenging perceived wisdom around CS and the impact it has on both the lives of the children sponsored but also on perceptions of global poverty within developed nations.

Unlike perhaps any other foreign aid activity, CS has become entrenched in both developed and developing worlds, with the transfer of funds from the wealthy to the poor transacted on a very personal and private level. Increasingly however, CS is a fundraising model with

inherent internal tension. On one side of the model is the focus of improving the lives of children, evident for over 90 years and justifying continuation of enormously successful one-to-one linkages which form the backbone of CS advertising and public relations. On the other is emergent knowledge that the best way to help children in the long-term is to fund development interventions or empower communities to demand their rights, in a way that can improve the lives of poor children through the communities, people and supportive structures surrounding them. Reconciling the two provides an ongoing challenge for CS INGOs restrained by the weight of public expectation associated with the individual sponsorship paradigm. International NGOs that do not use CS also experience tension between international programming and the fundraising required to support these interventions. As will be discussed with regards to CS there is also little work on the fundraising activities of development agencies – see Clarke (2008) and Feeny and Clarke (2007) for exceptions.

The balance of this final chapter seeks four outcomes: to review why sponsorship continues to be attractive to CS INGOs; to acknowledge the progress leading CS INGOs have made in responding to internal and external critique which peaked in the 1990s; to outline 13 key principles for all CS INGOs, regardless of the model of intervention followed; finally, to suggest direction for additional research.

Positive features of historic child sponsorship

The longevity of CS indicates a number of benefits to CS INGOs, donors and beneficiaries. These are shown below in Figure 15.1.

Humanized aid through relational giving

For sponsors and the INGOs that broker donations from them, the appeal of direct links to an individual has endured since its early use. In 1925 Save the Children UK staff wrote 'One of the most human aspects of the Save the Children Fund work is the photo-card adoption scheme, whereby necessitous children of many lands are being saved from misery' (SCF, 1925, p.36). Referring to the use of numbered photo-cards of ill and undernourished children showing name, address and age of the child, the author explained the importance of personal bonds formed through direct correspondence. The result was, according to Save UK staff, '...many a pathetic story of the friendships which are established between adoptive "parents" and their children' (SCF, Vol. 5, p.36). Similarly, staff of what is now Plan International

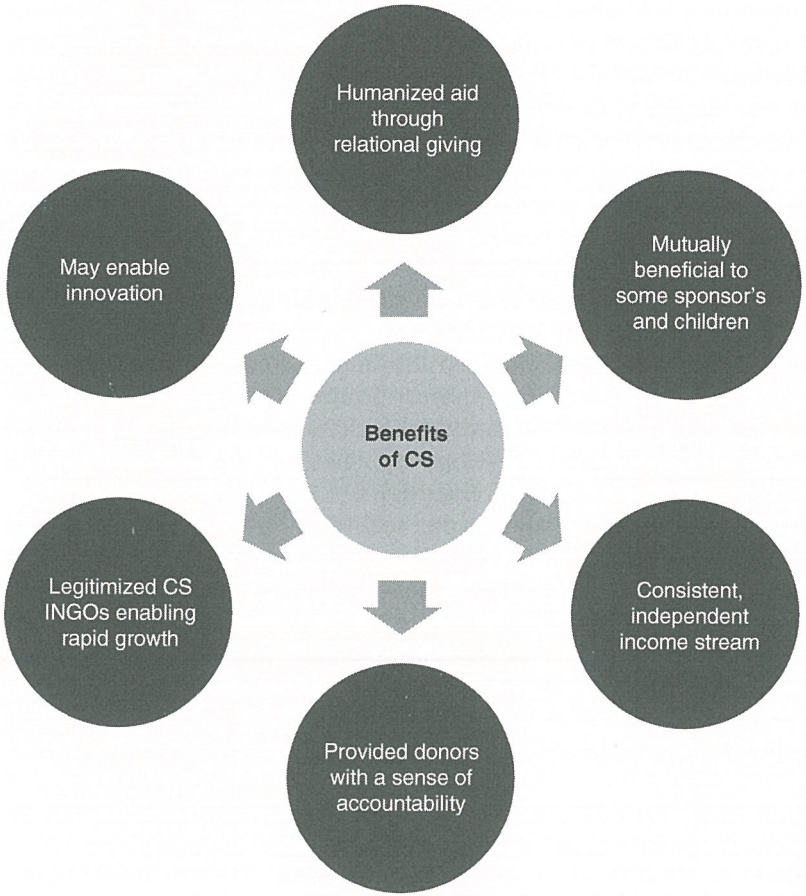

Figure 15.1 Commonly identified benefits of CS used to fund IICS and IFCS programmes

described a 'terrific personalness' leading to bonds so powerful that '...many Foster Parents offered to underwrite a Foster Child's continuing college education or special medical care' (Plan International, 1998, pp.23–24). Clearly, proponents of CS have and continue to view the relational side of traditional CS as a remarkable historic innovation in terms of its ability to attract support using specific children. Though the emphasis on personal, meaningful connection has waned in some organizations over time, this is not to undervalue the perceived benefits.

Mutually beneficial to sponsors and children

Referring to the psychological impact of images used by CS INGOs, *The New York Times* (1998, p.4) observed that 'A picture of a sad-eyed child can cut through politics, religion, even racial prejudice to touch whatever is maternal or paternal in the human heart'. Historically, donors to CS INGOs have been encouraged to bond with an individual, receiving cards, letters and updates over time. For some sponsors this can lead to a meaningful attempt to form a relationship if not a genuine friendship. After examining many carefully edited, cropped, depersonalized, depoliticized and de-identified letters to sponsored children in Zimbabwe, Bornstein (2001, p.604) concluded 'I was amazed at the intimacy, the pieces of lives shared, and the worlds translated in these packages, in the care that had gone into assembling them. I was touched by the letters; many seemed reasonable attempts to bridge the intimacy and strangeness of sponsoring a child in a country the sponsors had never visited.'

For some sponsors, the results are profound. Rabbitts (2012, p.930) accords significance of the act of sponsorship beyond a 'a tear-jerking campaign, or as a mundane regular commitment, but also as a deeply personal engagement that draws into play multiple different aspects of people's lives and intersects with existing identity- and community-building projects'. It is not clear what proportion of sponsors feel this way, or what sort of sponsorship programmes foster this deep engagement, and few researchers have stopped to consider that sponsorship may enrich the lives of those who give.

Benefits for sponsored children of a direct relationship with sponsors have also been frequently cited in the absence of scholarly research. Writing as an insider about Christian Children's Fund in the mid-1970s, Herrell observed that sponsored children could benefit from the 'emotional prop' provided by sponsors who cared, were likely to perform better at school when correspondence was regular, and benefited from the personal interest of sponsors who humanized the system and kept it 'sensitive to the ultimate implications of broad decisions upon the little guy at the end of the line, whose rice bowl may bear the agency's logo' (Herrell, 1974, pp.688–689). This remains true for many CS INGOs that retain an emphasis on child welfare and direct benefits rather than community development or rights-based development.

Consistent, independent income stream

It is an understatement to say that traditional CS has been 'very effective at raising funds' (Waters, 2001, p.5) or remains so. The promise of a personal relationship with a sponsored child has and continues to be

attractive to individual donors, resulting in sustained funding flows for CS INGOs and flexible income. For Plan International (2008, p.2) the regular, sustained nature of CS allows longer-term commitments to communities than possible with official aid and '...allows Plan International to remain considerably more flexible and politically independent than if reliant on government grants for a large portion of funding'. CS is also valued for the fact that it provides a relatively consistent income stream, over long periods of time. At a pragmatic level, this provides a stable funding platform for interventions insofar as 'long term relationships translate into long-term financial commitments' (Oprandi in Plan International, 1998, p.64).

Provided donors with a sense of accountability

For many individual donors a personal relationship with a beneficiary has been synonymous with oversight, accountability and a degree of development education. Don Paterson, a vice-president for donor and field relations at World Vision in the mid-1990s observed (in Moore, 1998, p.2). 'The sponsor has the opportunity to correspond with that child, and if they are able, to visit their family and community and hold us accountable to the work that we're doing.' Further, in organizations with a strong development emphasis there has been some consensus that, 'The personal and emotional appeal of child sponsorship also appears to strengthen supporter commitment and loyalty to the cause of development and has the potential to develop the sponsor's understanding of the development process' (Plan International, 2008, p.2). A 1998 history of Plan International noted that exchanges between sponsors and Plan families '...achieves three things: development education, personal linkage and accountability' (Plan International, 1998, p.64). According to staff from two very large CS INGOs consulted with during the writing of this chapter, sponsors may provide an unprecedented level of accountability by writing to children, asking the organization questions, answering surveys, visiting their children and even discontinuing.

Legitimized CS INGOs enabling rapid growth and expansion

Within many CS INGOs the historic commitment to child well-being has functioned as a motivator for staff, key feature of organizational identity, signifier of their legitimacy and principal reason for being. Manzo (2008, p.652) argues that the iconography of childhood continues to reinforce '...an impression of both institutional efficacy and the power to act in *loco parentis* by tapping into cultural associations of childhood with dependence, innocence, and the need for protection

and care'. In providing a direct link to individual children and their communities, CS functions as a bridge across cultures and communities, with CS INGOs as mediators and facilitators of two-way relationships. There can be no doubt that the influx of CS income allowed for remarkable growth of some INGOs. When Foster Parents Plan Netherlands initiated a nation-wide appeal for new sponsors in the early 1980s 'Phone lines in Amsterdam were knocked out as more than 50,000 new sponsors called in response'. Such booms 'Fuelled PLANs rapid expansion into some of the most challenging environments it had ever worked in, most notably Africa and South Asia' (Plan International, 1998, pp.50–51).

Enabled innovation over time

Arguably, long-term funding catalyses innovation. In the case of World Vision (2006, p.3) CS has been described as 'a dynamic mix of two ideas: brilliant fundraising (the child focus) and brilliant development (the community)'. In the Case of Save the Children (see Chapter 5 of this book) funds from CS are cited as a key to programmatic innovation, resulting in 'CS having a disproportionate influence on the way Save the Children makes large-scale, sustainable change for children.' Despite claims to the contrary, CS funding has been identified as a platform for innovation and engagement for long periods of time as evidenced in World Vision's Area Development Programs which remain active in particular locations for up to ten years. For CCF's early orphan care work, the purpose-built Hong Kong Children's Garden (constructed in the mid-1950s) housed 1,000 children in 98 cottages, each with house-parents, providing both formal and vocational education. CCF's experimentation with master-planned orphanages incorporating innovative family substitution and vocational education programmes verged on radical at the time though perhaps not pioneering. Though critics may counter that fundraising success and sponsor expectations hinder radical change, several large CS INGOs would argue that this is a simplistic analysis.

CS INGO response to critique

Public, media-led critique of CS INGOs, their fundraising and programmes peaked in the 1990s. However, critique has long been a part of CS INGO history, a matter explored in Chapter 3 of this volume devoted to evolution over time. Criticisms are discussed at length in Chapter 4. However, it is worth noting Ove's point that 1990s media critique, in

the USA in particular, emphasized the message that 'in order to "fix" CS, these organizations needed to improve their "development" practices in the "South" and their accountability in the "North"' (Ove, 2013, p.3). Collectively, CS INGOs were depicted as negligent in regards to their responsibilities towards sponsors and to sponsored children.

The untold part of the CS story thus far (in this volume at least) is the way leading INGOs responded to vociferous, sweeping, and often generalized critique based on anecdotes and isolated examples taken to represent systemic failure. Pointing out that many of the articles were published in a short period of time and were not well supported by facts, a senior staff member in one large CS INGO asked for acknowledgement that '...a group of agencies decided to take a disciplined approach to dealing with criticisms whether they were based on fact or perception. This led to accredited external agencies certifying sponsorship agencies on standards that address these issues' (Personal correspondence). Thus, an important piece of the story is the InterAction Accreditation and Certification work carried out to address the issues raised.

At time of writing InterAction is the largest alliance of USA-based international NGOs with over 180 members. In 1992, InterAction members agreed to self-monitor their activities and benchmark against a common set of standards – known as the PVO standards. Responding to critique, World Vision, Plan International-USA/Childreach, Christian Children's Fund, Children International and Save the Children formed a sub-group to formulate and adopt additional standards which were integrated with InterAction's broader PVO standards in 1999.

At considerable cost to the CS INGOs involved, the CS certification audits were launched in October 2004 and completed in July 2005 (InterAction, 2005, p.1). Completed audits were submitted to a multi-stakeholder Certification Review Panel (CRP), consisting of 'a child sponsor (an individual US citizen, who sponsors children), an institutional donor, a representative of the auditing firm awarding certification, and a subject matter expert, who was familiar with CS programs in the field.' In reality, the auditing process was expensive, problematic to facilitate, and dependent on a very small team visiting a very small proportion of project activity. However, in theory, the principle was excellent. For CS INGOs accustomed to operating with little external oversight, the auditing process provided a unique opportunity for peer review, especially when the subject matter expert came from another leading INGO.

Although there is much merit in the InterAction Child Sponsorship standards, and they have undoubtedly impacted perceptions of best

practice in the CS sector in the USA, it is worth noting that CS INGOs in various Northern countries abide by alternative codes of conduct. What is lacking though is a set of specific principles for CS applicable internationally. The principles set out below are presented in order to generate a dialogue amongst CS organizations, the children and local communities with whom they partner, and the supporters and donors that financially and emotionally commit themselves to this type of programming.

Principles for a child sponsorship code of conduct

Given the amount of funds raised by NGOs utilizing CS as model of development, it is imperative that these organizations are as efficient and effective as possible in both their programming and their fundraising. Based on the lessons learned from various contributions to this volume, the following principles for a Global Child Sponsorship Code of Conduct are suggested to aid and abet this efficiency and effectiveness. It is important therefore to note two things with regards to these proposed principles. Firstly, they are very likely to be already current practice for a number of INGOs. Secondly, these suggested principles are just that – principles that provide a framework for practices, not definitive prescriptions to homogenize CS INGOs so they are indistinguishable from one another. It is important that INGOs are distinct and serve various communities (both in developed and developing countries) as the uniqueness of responses to poverty aligned to the uniqueness experiences of poverty is central to effective outcomes. While often linked, these principles for a Child Sponsorship Code of Conduct will be presented – apart from the first and last – along the programming and fundraising divide. Such division though should be thought of as an inferred weighting of importance between the two. They are symbiotic. Indeed, the very first principle is the recognition of this interdependence.

Overarching

Principle 1: Recognizing child sponsorship as both a programming and fundraising model

The success of the CS interventions, especially as a development model, is the symbiotic relationships between fundraising and development work. The child as the focal point allows a relationship to be

presented that directly links the sponsor and the recipient. This linkage of those with excess resources and those with limited resources results in a resilient model upon which funds can be raised and expended. Organizations utilizing this model should explicitly recognize the intertwined components of this model. It is important that there be public recognition that this powerful tool has value because it is both a programming approach and fundraising activity.

Fundraising

Principle 2: Education of donors/sponsors

Development education as a concept reached its zenith in developed countries during the mid to late1980s. Since that time, aid agencies have invested less resources and efforts into informing and educating their donors and supporters around development issues, structural justice and distortions in the global economic system of trade. While there are clearly instances and examples of these education programmes in place, it is important to recognize that across the sector they are less prominent than more than two decades ago. Rather, the 'marketing' of development has seemly overtaken development education so that information concerning complex humanitarian emergencies, economic vulnerability, malnutrition, and so forth are parceled with appeals and the fundraising campaigns. As such, the information shared has shifted to support the imperative of fundraising. The consequence is that donors and supporters receive significant information that ties development 'success' to specific programming initiatives, rather than information that considers larger issues of inequity, power imbalances, national security, et cetera. Donors and supporters are therefore limited in their knowledge of the causes of international poverty and to their potential non-financial responses to such poverty. Given the close relationships organizations which utilize the CS model have with donors and supporters, there is a need to strengthen development education and decouple – to a large extent – knowledge transfer of development from further fundraising appeals and campaigns.

Principle 3: Clarity of primary beneficiaries

As has been clearly identified and illustrated with various case studies within this volume, there are a number of distinct approaches to programming premised upon the CS model of fundraising. This continuum of models is best illustrated by the primacy of the child as

beneficiaries within programming. Indeed, across this range, children are variously the sole beneficiary of any implementation to being a member of a much wider community to whom the implementation is targeted. Yet, despite where along this continuum the model sits, the fundraising material largely highlights the child as the focal point of concern. While a value judgment is not being made as to the effectiveness or efficiency of the programming model, it is important that organizations utilizing CS be more explicit and transparent as to the primacy of beneficiaries. If the child is the sole beneficiary of programming then that should be made clear. If though, the child is not the primary beneficiary and is just a member of a wider targeted community, then this also should be made clear in the fundraising materials. The latter does not preclude a child being a 'representative' member of the community or a 'window' into a community, but it should be made quite clear that this is indeed the case.

Principle 4: Images of children with family

The historical basis of the present CS model does have its roots in supporting children whom either did not have families or had been separated from families. In this sense they were orphaned and financial support was sought from sponsors to provide for their care. Within these circumstances, presenting the child in isolation was understandable. Since that time though, the absolute numbers of sponsored children who are orphaned as a proportion of total children sponsored is quite small. Yet, it remains a common practice to present the child in isolation from their family and their community. This gives rise to the sponsor incorrectly imagining that the child is reliant on the sponsor (and CS organization) for continuing well-being. It is important for the sponsor to better understand that the child whom they support is (most likely) a member of a family and (in most cases) a member of a community that plays central roles in their welfare. Organizations utilizing the CS model ought to recognize this familial and community connection through including families and communities in their images and place children in these social settings to limit sponsors inclinations of sole responsibility.

Principle 5: Offering funding choices to donors

The long history of CS speaks directly to its success. The simplicity of linking a child to a sponsor replicates the parent-child relationship and the attendant feelings of obligation, care and responsibility. Thus, it is

not uncommon for sponsors to feel unable to cease their sponsorship before the child's circumstances naturally bring about a point of closure (normally when the child reaches a certain age). As such, the length of financial support towards a CS organization is quite significant and thus becomes a regular and dependable source of funding. However, CS requires heavy administration, adding to its cost of delivery. These costs of administration fall on both aspects of the model – fundraising and programming. The fundraising costs may involve the receiving and translating of letters and communication between sponsor and child (which are encouraged) and the maintenance of records regarding the child's progress in school, et cetera. There is often additional personalized communication at times of significant events, especially Christmas celebrations, for instance. In addition to the programming costs, there are additional costs again associated with the communication between sponsor and child, photo updates, and monitoring of children's whereabouts. Alternative fundraising schemes do not carry such administrative costs and so alternatives to CS that are less expensive to maintain should be offered to sponsors to increase the organization's efficiency. Providing sponsors with informed choices can be key to developing in them awareness of alternatives.

Principle 6: Promoting equality of participants

That a child is dependent upon its parents or primary care givers is uncontested. Indeed, this dependency is the hallmark trait of the historic use of CS. CS works because the sponsor is moved to believe that their support is necessary for the child's well-being and as such the sponsor assumes a sort of parental responsibility. Such dependency also results in an unequal relationship between the sponsor and the child in which the sponsor holds a dominant position – that is, if the sponsor withholds their financial support the child is powerless to object. Such a dependency can then feed into other aspects which may lend to the sponsor viewing the child (and their community) as helpless and hopeless. Such views do not accord with a sense of partnership that is appropriate. To counter such critique, organizations utilizing CS need to promote the equality of the child and sponsor, emphasizing the capacity of the child, their family and community. Orphan care providers should take special care to empower families and communities rather than isolate children in institutions.

Programming

Principle 7: Non-discrimination of beneficiaries

Selection of children to be sponsored is a core activity of organizations utilizing CS. As evidenced from a number of personal stories contained within this volume, receiving support through CS can bestow significantly improved life chances. Again, whilst there are numerous CS models that differ in regard to the primacy of the child in terms of programming beneficiary, those models that still make prominent the child have a great responsibility in the selection of children to be sponsored. It is essential therefore that these choices are not biased to favour one ethnicity, religious adherence, gender or ability. It is also essential that considerations of whom sponsors may 'prefer' are also excluded from these decisions. The primary determinant of inclusion should be that of need or ability to represent the needs and progress of the community.

Principle 8: Community involvement in selection of children for sponsorship

As discussed above, the inclusion of a child into a sponsorship programming can be life-changing. Thus, the non-selection of a child can similarly be life-denying through the lack of access to those benefits. Just as the selection of these children should be non-discriminatory, it is also important that the community in which those children belong be heavily involved in the selection of those children. Given the importance of being non-discriminatory in selection, it is not recommended that the community make the selection without consultation with the organization, but rather that these two work together to identify those children best included for a range of reasons based foremost on need. The needs of children and their families are best understood by communities themselves and the empowerment of communities necessitates, wherever possible, that children should be carefully selected by members of their own community, regardless of whether they are direct beneficiaries or representative beneficiaries.

Principle 9: Alignment with current development best practice

Remaining cognizant of the differing models of CS, it is important that organizations utilizing CS implement their programmes in alignment with current ideals of best practice. In this way, it is essential that these organization fund activities that have been identified, designed, and implemented through community-led participatory practices, that gender analysis is central to these determinations, and that activities

are sustainable so that upon cessation of funding there remains a persistence of benefits from these activities. Constant monitoring and evaluation of CS activities are necessary to minimize unintended negative outcomes and to maximize both planned and unplanned benefits to the child and community. Where CS activities are essentially child-welfare oriented, such as in orphan care, conceptual understanding of best practice should ensure that orphans are cared for in their communities as a priority, in institutions as a last resort, and when institutional care is unavoidable, that it occur to the highest standard. In all cases, the true cost of quality interventions should not be hidden from sponsors.

Principle 10: Integration of programming activities

As with the importance of utilizing best practice, CS programming should be integrated with other activities if they are implementing non-sponsorship programming within the same community. This integration reduces duplication of effort, but also maximizes synergies that may exist between programming. Thus if an organization utilizing the CS model was supporting the school of sponsored children as well as implementing a water, sanitation and hygiene programme for the child's wider community, integrating the WASH education into the school curriculum would maximize the success of intended behavior change.

Principle 11: Greater public dissemination of programming evaluation

High quality monitoring and evaluation of CS programmes is not common place and wide dissemination of findings remains rather limited. This is even more so when less than optimal outcomes are reported. However, given the scope of use of CS funded interventions across a large number of small, medium and large aid agencies, it is important that the lessons learned around successes and failures be more widely shared to improve practice across all these organizations. Given the amount of information garnered by these organizations through their regular monitoring and evaluation activities, it would be beneficial that this be shared to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. This dissemination should not just be limited to other organizations utilizing the CS model but made available to sponsors and the general public in order to further educate people as to the reality of poverty and development.

Principle 12: Maintaining the dignity and agency of the child

Central to all these principles should be the guiding principle that the dignity of the child be maintained at all times. This does mean that images of the child used to encourage sponsorship do not represent the child as dependent, helpless or hopeless. Sponsors should not be encouraged through marketing or communication to pity the child they are sponsoring and feel that the child is utterly reliant upon their charity to survive. Further, the strengths and capacities of the child and their families and communities should be identified and celebrated in all communication with the sponsor to ensure that there is a clear understanding of equality between child and sponsor. It is important to highlight that children (and their families) do have agency within their lives and are not passive recipients of CS support and programming. As such their involvement and contribution to community development outcomes should not be minimized.

Principle 13: Ensuring good governance

Historic misuse of CS for both fundraising and programmes may be partially attributable to the governance structures of INGOs. As CS INGOs have prospered, it has become increasingly common to appoint senior managers without experience in the development or humanitarian aid sector. Ensuring that management boards have at least one expert positioned to counter the narrow imperatives of senior staff who are fixated on growth or donor relations, with concurrent peer review of programmes would be invaluable for both large and smaller organizations.

Consequences and challenges

These 13 principles, if implemented, will continue the positive trajectory of evolution displayed by some CS INGOs. As noted though, these principles are not a straightjacket of conformity, but do – if adhered to – contribute to a consistency of practice that ensures the primacy of the child in activities whether those activities are occurring within a developing country or a developed country. Further, while adhering to these principles, CS INGOs will continue to be able to operate in line with their own principles and histories and continue and build their relationships with their donor markets, but be assured that as a sector CS will be less a target for criticism.

How these principles can be codified into a Code of Conduct remains to be seen. Certainly there are instances of NGOs co-operating and working together to advocate on a range of development issues and in various countries there are already codes of conduct applying to

them. For example, within the United Kingdom, 13 leading NGOs (including World Vision UK, CARE, and OXFAM amongst others) cooperate in a formal way to raise funds for complex humanitarian emergencies. Formed in 1963, the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) undertakes to provide an efficient appeal mechanism through the media for national fundraising and public responses. It was formed in 1963 as a response to the BBC not wishing to refuse requests of publicity by NGOs for fundraising activities for a cyclone in Sri Lanka (at that time known as Ceylon). It was thought that a more effective public response would be gained if a single entity sought to raise funds rather than a number of NGOs seemingly competing for public donations.

It is possible and indeed to be encouraged that those international NGOs utilizing CS advertising techniques and expending funds through various modes of intervention, form an association of some form to provide forums for the debate and codification of these principles. Such a grouping could also provide opportunities for the realization and support of common research needs within this mode across these agencies. As noted at the start of this chapter, there is scant academic research into CS, with this volume representing this first significant work in this area to be published commercially. Clearly further research is required and this is in the interests of all key stakeholders, including the beneficiaries of CS, donors or supporters, and the NGOs themselves.

Further research into child sponsorship

Given the focus of improving the lives of the world's poor, it is unsurprising that the development sector garners significant research and academic interest. It is certainly not overstating the issue to claim that lives are at stake in this field of endeavor. For practitioners working in this area, more effective and efficient programming does save lives but also provides increased opportunity and hope to beneficiaries whose lives would without intervention be characterized by hunger, illiteracy, gendered violence, lack of access to clean and safe water or sanitation, ill-health and premature death. Better understanding the effectiveness of development interventions will enhance development outcomes and increase the impact of these interventions.

Knowing the value of better development programming and implementation has resulted in much research and academic analysis of activities across the development sector. There is significant (and often daunting) literature addressing foreign aid effectiveness, governance,

water and sanitation, health, education, rural agricultural, urban development, participation, gender and the environment – all of which is focused on learning from past experience to improve future practice in these sectors. As previously noted however, one of the founding models of development practice has been largely left untested and critically analysed. While there is no doubt that CS NGOs do invest considerable resources and time evaluating their own programming and that these reviews do shape and enhance approaches to CS, these reviews remain predominately available only to those within the NGO itself and are not publicly disseminated (see Wydick et al, 2013 and Glewwe and Wydick, 2013 as rare exceptions).

This lack of public dissemination has various consequences that constrain further potential improvements in CS. By not making these studies widely available, other CS INGOs are not only unable to take advantage of the lessons learned by INGOs with similar models, but must also expend further resources and time replicating evaluations (and mistakes) until they themselves generate these lessons for their own consumption. The lack of public dissemination also does not allow public scrutiny of actions by donors and supporters who must rely upon purposely prepared marketing documents to gain more knowledge of CS outcomes. Given the expressed purpose of these documents is to increase fundraising, it is rare (though not impossible – see Newmarch, 2011) to find information highlighting failures. Thus there is an unrealistic expectation of the good (and only the good) that can be expected from CS. When critical stories then do appear in the public press, donors and sponsors can feel particularly aggrieved or deceived.

To minimize these outcomes, it is important not only to make more public the existing internal research around CS but to actually increase the academic analysis of these specific models of intervention. There are a number of areas that it would be valuable to have greater understanding:

- Mapping of CS: a greater understanding of the scope and size of CS activities is fundamental before significant research can be undertaken of its efficacy and efficiency. It is not well understood as to where CS is taking place or the actual size of these programmes. A basic stock take across all organizations involved in this work would be of benefit as a starting point. Of particular interest is CS, child rights and potential to integrate CS with effective advocacy.
- Typologies of CS: Initial work has been presented in this volume regarding the typology of CS-funded intervention. Further testing

and development of this typology is now needed to help improve the overall model.

- Longitudinal studies of beneficiaries: Despite limited work, there is very little known as to the efficacy of CS over the longer term. Given its long history and the amount of resources expended, it is important to better understand the impact of CS over the longer term and the persistence of benefits associated with CS. Such studies are needed across all models of CS programming to assist in determining positive as well as negative lessons around practice.
- CS effectiveness in comparison to other development models: The administration of CS adds an impost to development programming both at the sponsorship end as well as the programming end. It is not known whether this impost results in more effective and efficient outcomes or is a cost that results in less beneficial outcomes. Comparison with other modes of programming would provide new knowledge to assist organizations utilizing CS to determine how they should prioritize CS programming within a range of non-sponsorship programming options to affect the greatest positive impact.
- Sponsor engagement and education: The number of citizens in developed nations sponsoring children is sizable. Better understanding the impact of the marketing and communications information received by these sponsors throughout their involvement with CS would provide great insights into the sophistication (or otherwise) of knowledge concerning development issues. These insights would allow great testing of sponsors' engagement with development issues both associated with their sponsorship but also independently of it.
- CS INGO institutional histories: For such resilient and publicly known organizations, little is widely known as to the institutional history of the major organizations utilizing CS. It is important to have stronger links to historical practices and policies to better understand contemporary practices and policies.

Research in each of these areas would likely provide valuable lessons and insights into not only just how CS is operationalized in developed and developing countries, but the impact of these activities both in the short and longer term. Given the billions of dollars provided each year to fund these interventions it is incumbent upon CS INGOs to undertake this research but to also work in partnership with academia to facilitate such research and ensure it is publicly and freely disseminated. Such transparency is in the best interest of the

INGOs, their supporters, but most importantly their intended beneficiaries.

Conclusion

Throughout this volume, the CS model has been discussed in ways that have rarely been seen before in public publication. Despite the size and history of CS, very little of its history and operations have been rigorously researched and analysis subjected to peer review. The importance of this volume therefore will be measured by the growth in such analysis and discussion in the future. Far more work is required to ensure that the great potential of child sponsorship is fulfilled to the point that it is universally accepted as a pathway for a brighter future for the world's children.

The absolute number of children, families, sponsors and financial resources involved in CS demand a greater level of scrutiny and understanding. Child sponsorship is so ubiquitous in so many countries yet this familiarity with it does not invite more than a cursory or veneer consideration. It is hoped that this volume has succeeded in doing more than this and while much more is required, that this will provide an appropriate starting point.

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